

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

UNCLAS STATE 288743

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: DJ, KE, OCLR

SUBJECT:MIDEASTFOR TURNOVER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1. FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ISSUED LONDON DECEMBER 2:

QUOTE THE ROUTINE RELIEF OF SHIPS DEPLOYED TO THE U.S. NAVY'S MIDDLE EAST FORCE (MIDEASTFOR) WAS COMPLETED THIS WEEK AT AQABA, JORDAN. THE DESTROYER USS DAVIS (DD-937) AND THE GUIDED MISSILE FRIGATE USS FURER (FFG-6) HAVE REPLACED THE GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER USS SELLERS (DDG-11) AND THE FRIGATE USS BOWEN (FF-1097) AS UNITS OF THE MIDEASTFOR. BOWEN AND SELLERS HAVE TRANSITTED THE SUEZ CANAL AND ARE ENROUTE THEIR HOMEPORT OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, WHERE THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

DAVIS AND FURER HAVE DEPARTED AQABA ENROUTE ROUTINE OPERATIONS IN THE RED SEA, PERSIAN GULF AND WEST INDIAN OCEAN AREAS. A FUEL STOP ON DECEMBER 5 AT DJIBOUTI, REPUBLIC OF
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DJIBOUTI, IS PLANNED, FOLLOWED BY A HOLIDAY PORT VISIT AT MOMBASA, KENYA.

THE MIDDLE EAST FORCE IS COMMANDED BY RADM SAMUEL PACKER, US NAVY. HIS THREE SHIPS INCLUDE THE COMMAND SHIP LASALLE

(AGF-3) AND TWO DEPLOYED SURFACE WARSHIPS THAT ROTATE

ABOUT EVERY FOUR MONTHS. THE MIDDLE EAST FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED IN JANUARY 1949. ITS MISSION IS TO REPRESENT U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS AND TO MAINTAIN U.S. PRESENCE IN THE PERSIAN GULF, RED SEA AND WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN AREAS, AND TO PROMOTE GOOD WILL, UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL RESPECT THROUGH PORT VISITS TO THE NUMEROUS COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN AFRICA. END QUOTE

2. EMBASSIES DJIBOUTI AND NAIROBI SHOULD INFORM HOST GOVERNMENTS THAT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF RELIEF OF SHIPS OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE, SHIP VISITS TO PORTS OF HOST GOVERNMENTS WERE ALSO MENTIONED. EMBASSIES SHOULD SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT HOST GOVERNMENTS MIGHT WISH TO AUTHORIZE PASSING OF SAME INFORMATION TO LOCAL PRESS.
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